Eradication of Poverty

*313. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per the Ninth Plan documents issued by Government, Poverty eradication is one of the major objective;

(b) whether it is also a fact that there were 321 million poor in 1973-94 as against 320 million in 1993-94 and out of this, 244 million live in the rural areas;

(c) whether the number of people living below the poverty line continue to be about 320 millions, inspite of the various poverty alleviation schemes inforce; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to break out of this impasse?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The table below provides the percentage and number of people living below poverty line in rural and urban areas as estimated by the Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Prof. D. T. Lakdawala.

Year	Poverty Ratio			No. of poor (in million)		
	Rural	Urban	Combined	Rural	Urban	Combined
1973-74	56.4	49.0	54.9	261.3	60.0	321.3
1977-78	53.1	45.2	51.3	264.3	64.6	328.9
1983	45.7	40.0	44.5	252.0	70.9	322.9
1987-88	39.1	38.2	38.9	231.9	75.2	307.1
1993-94	37.3	32.4	36.0	244.0	76.3	320.3

(c) Though the number of people below poverty line in 1973-74 was almost the same as the people living below the poverty line in 1993-94, the proportion of people below poverty line has declined both in rural and urban areas. During this period the number of people below poverty line in rural areas declined from 261.3 million to 244.0 million. A major reason for absolute number of people below poverty line remaining the same between 1973-74 to 1993-94 in

spite of substanital reduction in the poverty proportions was the rise in population in the intervening years. The reduction in proportion of people below poverty line was achieved by a combination of accelerated rural growth and direct attack on poverty through anti poverty programmes. Substantial success has been achieved in containing the incidence of poverty and mitigating the severity of the poverty problem in the country. However, vigorous efforts are needed to completely eradicate poverty from the country.

(d) The Government has adopted a three pronged strategy for reducing poverty. It comprises of (i) accelerated economic growth with a focus on sectors which are employment intensive; (ii) human and social development through basic minimum services; and (iii) targetted anti-poverty programmes. There has been a growing recognition that successful implementation of the anti poverty programmes depends on the active participation of the beneficiaries in the formulation and execution of such programmes. The anti-poverty programmes for generation of both self-employment and wage-employment have, therefore, been recently redesigned to improve their efficacy/impact on the poor. Formation of self help groups is encouraged to bring forth the inherent potential of the poor to help themselves. The self help groups are assisted by the Government agencies by providing training, technical guidance and financial support to take up income generating activities that would enable the beneficiaries to earn a decent level of living.

Diversion of PDS oil in black market in Delhi

314. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUMAND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the large scale diversion of PDS kerosene oil for black market in Delhi depriving the genuine card holders;

(b) if so, whether Government have made any exercise to identify the PDS outlets in the city, indulging in such malpractices;

(c) if so, what is the outcome thereof; and

(d) what measures have been taken by Government to check it?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (d) The Central Government through Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas allocates kerosene to the State/Union Terrorites for Public Distribution System. The distribution of kerosene within a State is responsibility of the State Government. The attention of the Government of National Capital Territory (NCT) Delhi has been drawn to the incidences of diversion of PDS